



# FORMULATING THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LIFE SKILLS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: A REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

Today's world is evolving with global challenges. It is important to know that more than 16 percent of today's world population belongs to youth aged between 15 to 24 years (World youth report 2030 agenda, 2018). To equip them, there is a dire need to nurture Life skills relevant to the evolving context. Hence the construct of life skills was broadened to other thematic skills areas that include: Physical literacy, Psychological literacy, Health literacy, English Language literacy, Political literacy, financial literacy, Digital literacy, Environmental literacy, Global Awareness and Ethics Literacy. The purpose of this research study is to systematically review formulation of 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills conceptual framework.

**KEYWORDS:** life skills, youth, Framework, 21<sup>st</sup> century, literacy, thematic skills.

## INTRODUCTION:

World today is evolving with global challenges like poverty, hunger, violence, conflicts, terrorism, discrimination, disparity, natural disasters, emergencies, climate change, health pandemics and many more stemming from day to day human activities. More or less, these challenges are universal in nature and seem independent, however, in reality, they are interconnected and deep rooted in day to day human behavior. If we look closely, this macro issue of interconnectedness of the global challenges is manifested in everyday life of people in the miniature form with same complexities and intricacies. The ability of an individual to deal with such day to day challenges is the crucial component that has to be considered in the process of formulating the feasible solution models. With the world evolving rapidly, the need to equip the people to deal with the challenges clearly emphasizes on enabling people to reach their fullest potential to lead an optimum life at all levels. In this scenario, there is dire need to strike a balance between the present developments needs without arbitrating those of the future. This envisages the importance given for the succeeding generations, the young people as the key collaborator's as they will experience the results either positive or negative of the current choices they make thus highlighting the crucial role of youth in addressing the global challenges (Hwang & Kim, 2017). In Particular, investing in youth would be the right best step in breaking the deadlock of entrenched loops of inequity among the diaspora of youth in India and the world (Social Statistics Division, 2017).

Youth is defined as the transition period towards adulthood, in which awareness on independence and cognizance of interdependence is gained by individuals as members of a community (Hwang & Kim, 2017). It is evident that the young demographic force is at risk facing the struggle with a never ending list of burdens thus, hampering their transition into a smooth adulthood. It is important to know that more than 16 percent of today's world population belongs to youth aged between 15 to 24 years (World youth report 2030 agenda, 2018). For statistical purposes, The United Nations describes young people as people between the ages of 15 and 24 (UN, 1985). According to Ministry of youth affairs, In India, 65% of Indian population 65% is under the age of 35 years. This qualifies India as the youngest nation. As per the national youth policy of India, Youth is defined as population between the 15-29 years comprising 27.5% of total population (National youth policy, 2014). As per Karnataka state youth policy 2012, 16 to 30 years is defined as youth (Karnataka youth policy, 2012) and as per the projection of the economic survey of Karnataka 2018-19, it highlights the fact that 55% (3.5 crore) of total Karnataka's population is youth. Taking into account the crucial demographic dividend (Economic survey of Karnataka, 2018-19), it is vital to equip and engage today's youth in working towards a sustainable future.

In this endeavor, youth should be enabled and supported with necessary life skills to navigate through this complex and diverse world to realize their true potential to shape their own life and the world around them. Therefore, it is imperative to create the platform for the entire diaspora of youth irrespective of cast, creed, race, gender to proactively participate in gaining life skills relevant to present context thus paving the way to continuously acquire and develop the right Attitude, Knowledge and behavioral traits to traverse through challenges of life and the society they live in contributing to Sustainable Development Goals.

## LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION:

Even though, life skills existed since the evolution of human race, only over the

last two and a half decades there has been a scientific study of life skills education in various contexts. The rationale behind the need for life skills to hone the skills required to deal with day to day challenges of life stands validated in the past, present and in future as the primary objective of life skills education. The idea of life-long learning, the underneath essence of the contemporary world life skills education emerged from the report submitted by International Commission on the Development of Education commissioned by UNESCO headed by Edgar Faure in the year 1972. The preamble of this report highlights the lack of any definite hypothetical wholesome life skills to be handed out to the student youth irrespective of the intellectual ability of the person. Hence it stresses on bringing in evolving models especially on the philosophy of lifelong learning for the learning society (Faure et. al., 1971). Subsequently, the life skills construct is viewed through diverse range of contexts ranging from Psychological, socio-economic, health, literacy, physical, sexual, political and vocational depending on culture to culture and country to country.

## Life Skills: Perspectives of United Nations, its subsidiaries and other international organizations

WHO describes life skills as the capacity for adaptive and constructive behavior that helps people to cope effectively with daily life's demands and challenges. It also stresses on elastic nature of definition of life skills (WHO, 1993).

The International Bureau of Education (IBE) describes life skills as personal leadership and social skills which are important to work properly on an independent basis. It is derived from the four pillars of education as Learning that includes to know, to do, to be and to live together (Delors et. al, 1996)

According to The OECD, Life skills is defined based on three criteria that are generic in nature adopted from DeSeCo project and they are:

- key competencies contribute to an overall successful life and For an accomplished life and a well-functioning society, key capabilities of individuals are primary
- Based on the diverse contexts, vital challenges can be addressed
- It is subjective individuals and their individualities.

It maps out that these key capabilities works best in groups which is self-governed that possess societal heterogeneity and uses the tools effectively. (Rychaen & Salganik 2001)

UNESCO defines life skills as the entity that depends on the context and relevance of concept and/or philosophy adopted in empowering people. It is in contention that the experiential inculcation of life skills results in literacy relevant to the context and relevance, rather than a capsule model being formulated as the life skills education. Thus, the life skills are incorporated through the experiential learning with the use of basic education skills like reading, writing and listening based the subject matter being incorporated. To summarize, the meaning of basic education consists of the life skills that are incorporated by enhancing the literacy levels of the individuals based on the subject matter. Hence UNESCO promotes diversifying nature on life skills rather than generalization of life skills (UNESCO, 2003).

UNICEF iterates Life skills as a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills that can help people make good choices, interact effectively, and improve skills in coping and self-management that can help lead a safe and productive life". It mainly focuses on promoting health literacy through life skills education by adopting participatory learning methods. The UNFPA aims to impart awareness on reproductive health to aiming at a world of wanted pregnancy, safe child birth and contribution to realize innate potential of every young person (UNICEF, 2011).

UNICEF's Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) framework delineates life skills as a method to be applied to four dimensions in different learning areas: the cognitive, the person, the social and the instrumental. It pioneers the philosophy of Life skills as an intersection of interconnected and cross functional entities like attitude, knowledge, skills and values forming as an integral part of education of higher quality (UNICEF, 2019).

UNICEF describes life skills as an approach to behavior change or behavior development aimed at addressing a balance of three areas: awareness, attitude and skills. It envisages the importance of Life skills as a channel to promote holistic well-being of young people and thus contributing to enhancement of innate competence of the same. It also stresses on accommodation of various literacy skills into the concept of life skills to address the universal contemporary issues like education in livelihood generation, health, environmental safeguard, gender equality and peace promotion (UNICEF, 2019).

#### NEED FOR LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION:

Even though, the human diaspora is impacted with diverse inequities, one core issue is the lack of knowledge of oneself, the people around, the community around, the society, the country and the world in general and its respective social knowledge, orders, norms and procedures resulting in depletion of human capital in all walks of life. Largely, this complex scenario is in continuum due to deep rooted inequity spread across in all forms of social structures that blocks and limits the humans to leverage the fundamental rights, opportunities and the necessary support system available for all. And also, it is important to observe that the social pandemic of discrimination based on gender, caste, social class and rural and urban divide results in more vulnerable inequitable society. Thus this inequity in continuum from generations has been the greatest challenge in the process of building robust human capital comprising of right attitude, knowledge and behavior to aspire and attain the Life skills required for an adult that is totally different from their predecessors to live a life useful for oneself and the society.

According to UNICEF's Comprehensive life skills framework report, knowledge is considered as the core of any productive society, nevertheless, the ability to develop the skills to apply the knowledge needs right attitude and behavior nurturing (UNICEF, 2019). To address this requirement, the task of spearheading the need for life skills pertinent to present and future generations that can be applied to reach at a defined goal of imparting 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills for individuals across all the human development stages is in continuum. It will enable the individuals especially today's youth to lead to live and lead an informed life eventually taking rights decisions in all aspects of their life resulting in responsible citizens of the nations and thus march towards becoming global citizens contributing to sustainable development goals.

#### NEED FOR LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN INDIA:

Interestingly, 65 Percent of the population in India is under the age of 35 years (Ministry of Youth affairs and sports, 2019). It is pivotal to take steps to promote youth of India by leveraging by recognizing and supporting their innate strengths to take informed decisions at all levels thus nurturing potential global workforce competency to promote Global citizenship traits contributing to social action in terms of promoting individual's attitude, knowledge and behavior for sustainable future. Ironically, as per Annual reports from national agencies on education and achievement, Indian youth have low levels of awareness and knowledge on the subjects related to basic Technical, vocational, and social skills required to be competent to resolve the problems and challenges of day-to-day life (UNICEF, 2019). As per the report, most of these young populace lives in the states of Andhra, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and they belong to Minority communities, scheduled caste and Scheduled tribes. The reasons for their present lack of life skills is deep rooted from their formative years and are diverse in nature and it includes: Malnutrition, delayed mental and cognitive development, lack of basic language and mathematical skills, social stigma, social biases like gender, cast, social class and lack of strong fundamental education. This affects their ability to learn in par with the national standards eventually leading to negative impact for productive youth and adulthood phase of Human development stage. And also, compared to urban youth, females in rural areas drop out of formal education and most of the female youth are engaged in low and/or unpaid work. The learning difficulties at formative years carry forward to their youth phase making them less capable in basic literacy skills required for everyday tasks. (UNICEF, 2019)

Thus, such young people facing diverse range of inequities and exclusion at every stage of Human development phase become socially vulnerable and are incapacitated from acquiring and applying the life skills needed for life leading to no and/or low levels of attitude, knowledge and behavior resulting in a brittle society. It is also important to learn that, for the next 20 years, every year, more

than 12 million Indian youth aged between 15 to 29 years are in pipeline to join the Indian and global workforce. Thus imparting Life skills education for Indian diaspora of youth is a crucial task ahead of all the stakeholders of the society to promote sustainability at all levels that includes: Individual, Familial, Community, Societal, State, National and very importantly at the global level.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LIFE SKILLS

To empower today's youth to transition into adulthood, imparting 21<sup>st</sup> century Life skills education is an imperative step because, if a youth is empowered, the family is empowered, if families are empowered, the communities are empowered. The empowerment at levels from individuals to global level is possible as today's youths will become tomorrow's leaders as they are key stakeholders contributing to sustainable development of the present and the future. Even though, 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills are important for individuals across the spectrum of Human development stages, the present and future challenges of world needs to special emphasis on developing 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills for youth. The field of mental health acknowledges that specific psychosocial and thematic literacy skills are better consolidated in youth stage of human development because thematic Competencies is an ongoing process in a human life and evolves s throughout the lifespan. As the world is rapidly transforming in the fields of developmental, social, economic, Human rights, environmental and technological challenges, the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century youth varies accordingly.

In particular, the ability to deal with day to day challenges of present and future world becomes central to the framework of formulating the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills framework. Thus, the framework identifies diverse range of literacy skills through the lenses of the thematic areas as the most vital skills to be imparted in youth stage of human development as identity formation consolidates from Individual level to global level.

The new set of literacy skills need to be developed in concurrence. In particular, imparting 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills enable youth to consciously learn, organize, implement, interpret and take informed decisions from individual choices to societal choices. This enables the youth to become fully functioning persons transforming into global citizens. In this scenario, the need of the hour is to enable today's youth challenges of present and future thus building a strong and robust diaspora of equitable human capital. Hence the theoretical frameworks considered for developing 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills framework are as follows.

#### FULLY FUNCTIONING PERSON THEORY BY CARL ROGERS (1961):

According to Rogers (1961), individuals are organismic in nature, in which they are constantly evaluating their experiences of life resulting in self-actualization at all times. The essence of self-actualization is central to consciously realize their true need for a life of fulfillment. He also stresses on the effect of conditional and unconditional positive regard respectively. However, the self-worth in conditional positive regard is solely based on the social worth perceived from the environment the individual develops, whereas, the self-worth in unconditional positive regard is based on self-actualization tendency, a key notion of becoming a fully functioning person. The traits of fully functioning person as per Rogers (1961) are as follows.

- An evolving openness to experience resulting in acceptance of either or both positive and negative experiences. Nevertheless, a conscious effort is made in working towards negative experiences.
- Living life based on the Philosophy of Existentialistic living. The ability to live in present despite of preconceived notions and stereotyped thoughts.
- The ability to believe in their own organisms leading to their individualistic judgment and thus making appropriate decisions without any influence of societal norms with their sense of right or wrong.
- They possess immense freedom to act on their choices irrespective of the norms. They are self-deterministic in their behavior and also take the ownership on the same.
- They are creative in whatever they do and never conform to the norms as they are key risk takers.
- They are highly reliable individuals who can be trusted as they are transparent and open to their demands in life. They also know to strike a balance between their innate goodness and external aggressive needs.
- They lead a life full of richness by accepting the spectrum of good and bad, courage and fear, love and rejection.

Thus, the framework of the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills identify the traits of fully functioning person as central theory to be incorporated to nurture today's youth to become global citizens to face the present and future challenges of sustainable future.

#### HOWARD GARDNER'S THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE (1983):

According to Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence, intelligence is not a sin-

gle whole lot, rather proportion of diverse range of intelligence types. There are nine kinds of intelligences and are as follows.

- Logical and/or Mathematical
- Spatial and Visual
- Musical
- linguistic
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal
- Bodily kinesthetic
- Naturalistic
- Existentialistic

Even though, every individual will have all types of intelligence, more than one intelligence type will be dominant in nature. This paves way for consciously understanding one's own dominant intelligence type and work towards improving other intelligence types that has been ignored and weakened. The 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills framework incorporates the importance of all nine intelligence types in youth for a sustainable present and future. Furthermore, based on the multiple intelligence theory, the capacity building of today's youth can be directed towards building right attitude, knowledge and behavioral patterns to live a responsible life starting from individual, familial, community and societal life. In summary, 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills theoretical framework based on multiple intelligence theory is vital for empowering youth for sustainable present and future.

#### UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AGENDA 2030 (2015)

Considering the rate and gravity of such global challenges, the United Nations has been a frontrunner since 1972 Conference on the Human Environment to the recent 2015 United Nations sustainable development summit and has pioneered in formulating the global challenges into a Sustainable developments goals 2030 agenda framework arriving at 17 specific goals and 169 targets. The figure 1.1 depicts the 17 goals.



Figure 1.1: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals-2030

#### 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS FRAMEWORK (2012):

As per the National education association, the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are becoming essential for everyday learning for the students (trilling & fadel, 2012). This operates on the framework that focuses on four student outcomes and support systems. The four components of student outcomes are as follows:

- **Content knowledge and 21<sup>st</sup> century themes:** The key subjects like English, other languages, mathematics, science, history, economics, civics, geography and expertise on the same is considered. Addition to this the themes such as Global Awareness and literacy's on Environmental, Health, Financial, Economic, Business, Entrepreneurial and Civic knowledge are considered.
- **Learning & innovation skills:** These skills are broken down into 4 C's Creativity and Innovation, Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- **Information, media & technology skills:** The children and youth needs to be able to access all of the information available to them to create media products. This should enable the youth to keep up to date with the technology evolution. These literacy skills are subdivided into Information, Media and ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) knowledge base.
- **Life & career skills:** Flexibility and adaptability is identified as core skills to deal with problems in day to day life. Initiation and Self-Directive, Social and Cross-Cultural competence, responsible, Productive and

Accountable are considered as career oriented skills.

- **Support Systems for Implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills:** Innovative systems have to be built to get learners of 21<sup>st</sup> century engaged in a real-time and personalized content. The support systems includes: defined set of 21st Century skills and Standards, measurement scales, syllabus, instruction's, conducive environment both at schools at homes, formulation of Professional development programmes.

#### WHO LIFE SKILLS FRAMEWORK (1993):

According to World Health Organization (WHO), "Life skills are defined as the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable humans to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life, (WHO, 1993). The ten life skills include awareness on self, Empathy, Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Decision making, Problem Solving, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and Coping with emotions." However, the life skills construct has to be looked into as a broader construct. It is important to observe that WHO Life skills construct is based on theoretical foundation of psychosocial skills that are generic in nature and the WHO clearly states that the life skills construct can be elastic in nature and thus creating an avenue to explore.

In summary, the formulation of theoretical framework for 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct is based on the theories that includes: of Fully functioning person (Rogers, 1961), theory of multiple intelligence (Gardener, 1983), WHO life skills (WHO, 1993), United Nations Sustainable development goals 2030 Agenda of United Nations (UN, 2015) and the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills framework (Trilling & Fadel, 2012) in addressing the global challenges to formulate a sustainable future. Hence, the task of defining and the measuring 21<sup>st</sup> Century Life skills construct are extremely important milestones in constructing and validating a comprehensive 21<sup>st</sup> century Life skills assessment battery.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE: RATIONALE FOR NEW LIFE SKILLS PERSPECTIVE

Lima and Brown (2007) in the paper titled Global citizenship and new literacy's providing new ways for social Inclusion highlights the point on information being the most valuable asset for an individual to deal with the diverse needs of a changing society. In view of the fact, the diverse range and volume of information available for any individual in these changing times needs skills to identify, learn, explore, apply, validate and communicate this information in an efficient way. The study was aimed at finding the traits of global citizenship by eliciting the characteristics of students from developing and developed countries who use the ICT in a socially valued way by decoding the self-perceptions. The results of the study throw light on skills becoming the components of concept of new literacy's inevitable for individuals to deal with challenges of the present world and to become informed global citizens of the society they live in. The stellar point on new literacy's becoming inevitable skills for students paved way for the researcher to formulate the new set of literacy's in the present research study.

Global evaluation of life skills education programmes office, UNICEF, Final report. (2012) rolled out a global evaluation of all LSE programmes across 70 UNICEF countries to evaluate the relevance, coverage, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of LSE initiatives, and to consider UNICEF's role in preparing for strategic support for all future programmes. This evaluation report is a 177-page exhaustive compilation of most of the vital sources of information on life skill models. The report emphasizes broadly on the absence of standardization of LSE curriculum, assessment tools and techniques, limited or no focus on effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism involving standardized quality assurance and reporting mechanisms. It focuses on the need for addressing formal and informal education models, general psychosocial skills, thematic skills and implementation focus in standardization of the LSE as most of the LSE models are pointing dominantly either on thematic or on Psychosocial skills. It also talks about handling socio-cultural and religious contexts in designing LSE curriculum in the conservative society by the way of appropriate analysis and restructuring. In the entire study, only one Indian research study has been taken as a reference for consideration. It is observed that the LSE models from each country were based on the priorities of respective countries sectoral and national policies as part of a response mechanism. However, it emphasizes the need for institutionalization of LSE framework by identification and development of life skills construct in a compressive way. This became the milestone point for the researcher to explore the life skills construct relevant to the contemporary scenario.

Nicholas and Wynes. (n. d) in an expert advice on addressing climate change in the article changing behavior help meet long term climate targets highlights the use of the eleven behavioral interventions used in addressing the menace of greenhouse gas emissions and the psychological constructs include: Nudges, prompts, justification, instructions, feedback, social modeling, cognitive dissonance, commitment, rewards, competition and goal. It shows the application of psychological constructs to address societal challenges.

Hwang and Kim (2017) in their handbook titled UN and SDGs: A Handbook for Youth highlighted the need for enabling the youth to aspire for achieving sustainable development goals. In this pursuit, exploration of youth's perspective on



United nations sustainable development goals by the youth becomes inevitable. It also discusses about the need for best practices and policies to keep the youth informed and engaged about the attainment of sustainable development goals. This bridging of knowledge and perspective on sustainable development goals overlaps with the variance of life skills required for the contemporary world youth. This gap led the researcher to take on the journey of attempting a conglomeration of sustainable development goals in the domain of new life skills perspective.

Social Statistics Division Central Statistics Office Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (2017) in its report Youth in India highlights the need for channelizing the youth energy in India to develop a prosperous society. It also highlights the fact of India having a largest youth population in the world and the need to harness this youth populace by strategic initiatives to maximize the human potential across the verticals. For this purpose, the report also suggested on planning, implementing and monitoring the developmental programmes for youth. These suggestions led the researcher to work on taking the journey of development of new perspective of life skills construct based on the need of the present challenges of the world.

Nasheeda et. al (2018) in their work titled A narrative systematic review of life skills education: effectiveness, research gaps and priorities had explained the investigation done on life skills programs being implemented globally and to elucidated the research gaps. The findings of research revealed the differences in life skills education within developing countries and developed countries. In general, the life skills programs in developed countries was more systematic promotes positive behavior of every individual youth, whereas, the life skills programs in developing countries lack systematic implementation and often produce short term results and does not contribute to individual youth development. Hence these findings paved way for developing sustainable life skills programs by defining 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct that addresses the disparities elicited from the findings.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE: 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LIFE SKILLS CONSTRUCT AND ITS 10 DIMENSIONS

### Physical literacy:

Tomeldan (2014) in his blog titled PHYSICAL LITERACY FOR YOUTH: Why is it important? Highlights the need for physical literacy for youth as there is increasing obesity among the youth and forecasts Obesity crisis by 2050. The blog also throws light on early onset of lifestyle diseases like type 2 diabetes, respiratory, cardiac and orthopaedic issues is due lack of Physical literacy. As the present generation youth spend more time being vegetated living virtual lives, the author highlighted the need to impart physical literacy and engage youth in physical activities as part of their healthy life style and thus reduce unnatural health complications in future. This fact was alarming for the researcher to define physical literacy as one of its dimensions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct for youth.

Longmuir et al. (2018) in the research titled Physical Literacy Knowledge Questionnaire: feasibility, validity, and reliability for Canadian children aged 8 to 12 years, exhibits the importance of physical literacy in school children measuring the four dimensions to be productive and live a healthy life in the formative years. The Dimensions include the movement, performance, health and fitness based on the innate motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding. The construct and the content are validated through Delphi method by experts. The tool consists of 21 open ended questions. Questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 are attitude based questions. Questions 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 19 are knowledge based. Questions 12, 17, 18, 20 and 21 are behavior based. This clearly points to the fact that three dimensions are important in constructing the scale. Nevertheless, the number and choice of open ended questions seems limited in assessing the physical literacy level of students from 8 to 12 years. This aided the researcher to identify the research gap and thus the need for constructing a scale for youth with a comprehensive representation of the physical literacy construct.

Sport England (2018) in its survey report titled Active Lives Children and Young People Survey showcases key findings about the effect of physical literacy on children and young people. It emphasizes on correlating higher level of happiness, resilience and social trust of children young people to physical literacy. It also highlights on the fact that the level of Physical literacy declines with age and the older the people are, the lower the levels understanding the concept of physical literacy, confidence, competence and enjoyment. It reports that girl's, children and young people from less affluent families are less likely to enjoy being active. The positive aspect of the report is that children and young people with high level of physical literacy are most active people. This report led the researcher to embark on defining the physical literacy dimension for the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct.

### Psychological literacy:

Cranney and Dunn (2011) in their paper titled the psychologically literate citizen: Foundations and global perspectives argue about the essence of Psychological literacy in dealing with solving everyday problems of the society in an ethical and socially responsible ways contributing to the wellbeing of the society. However, the paper limits psychological education to students of psychology education domain.

This led the researcher to append psychological literacy as one of the dimension under 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct across multiple disciplines of education for youth.

Roberts. L.D et. al (2015) in their paper titled The measurement of psychological literacy: A first approximation highlights on the need for measuring the psychological literacy among undergraduate students as the application of psychological knowledge to personal, familial, occupational, community and societal challenges is vital. The authors emphasize on the immediate need on accurate measurement of Psychological literacy. As the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct is aimed at imparting competencies in youth, the idea of application of psychological knowledge to youth across all disciplines becomes imperative. This paved way for the researcher to define the construct of psychological literacy as one of its dimension and develop the assessment tool for the same.

Taylor (2019) in his paper titled Psychological literacy for all: an overview of this 'literacy' and how it is relevant for students of all disciplines highlights about the need for Psychological literacy for all students across various discipline as human behavior is the core reason for all problems of the society. The author argues that even though the psychological literacy is part of Psychology education, it is more important for the public good. It also uses case studies to explain the way psychological literacy can be imparted and thus applied in the everyday life. Finally, it suggested on interdisciplinary discussion amongst the educators across the domains in incorporating psychological literacy into the society. This compelling point led the researcher to define and add psychological literacy as one of the dimensions under 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct as the main aim is to enrich human potential to deal with the challenges of the present and future world.

Brooks (2019) in his article titled Health Literacy: What Is It and Why Is It Important? Elaborates the term health literacy and highlights the need for Health literacy as every health care decision needs to be collaborative in nature. It unveils the essence of Health literacy in enabling the individuals to take control of their own and their familial well-being by making informed healthcare choices by sharing the information with all the stakeholders of health care. The author also stresses that health literacy skills enables an individual to explore and avail the preventive and curative information on how, when, what and where questions related to health conditions and thus make rightful choices in every phase of health care. Quality health care is one of the prevailing challenges of the world and the article substantiates the need for health literacy as one of the dimensions of 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct as lack of health literacy can have detrimental consequences, both at an individual health and the nation as a whole. Without health literacy individuals can suffer real consequences.

Manganello. J.A et.al (2015) in their work titled Development of the Health Literacy Assessment Scale for Adolescents (HAS-A) proposes health literacy as a crucial component in living a healthy life. The authors of the paper have developed a health literacy scale for youth to measure the ability to obtain health information, understand the same, communicate the information effectively and process the information to make informed decisions. However, the scope of research in the discussion chapter highlights on adding health literacy environment as an important component in defining the construct. This led the researcher to define an exhaustive list of components under Health literacy dimension of the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct and thus develop a healthy literacy assessment scale.

### Political Literacy:

UNDP (2013) guide titled enhancing youth political participation throughout the electoral cycle highlights on the need for initiating reforms in enhancing the active participation of youth in the political system. Even though, more than half of the world population is youth, the participation of youth in political climate is low. As the youth are key stakeholders of the future, enabling them at all levels is inevitable process. In this regard, this guide presses on good practices to be incorporated for all the stakeholders involved in dealing with youth. It stresses on the having youth friendly legal framework allowing the age to run to the elections from 25 years to the age for exercising the vote. And also, the guide stresses on simulating the pre-election, election and post-election period experiences at school and college levels through innovative civic education practices amongst which capacity building on the knowledge level of youth on political literacy taking significance. When the capacity building occurs, naturally the assessment of the knowledge on political also arises. This envisaged the researcher to work towards adding the political literacy as one of the dimension in 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct and thus to construct a tool for assessing Political literacy among youth.

Perveen and Awan (2017) in the research titled Analysis of Curriculum about Political Literacy as a Dimension of Citizenship Education found that the inclusion of political literacy as a dimension of citizenship education in the curriculum of secondary school levels of Pakistan is very poor. Even though, there was a 100% mention about political literacy of the educational policy 2009, the curriculum syllabi and the textbooks doesn't reflect the same. And also, the researchers, based on the review of literature zeroed in on ten components of political literacy. Conversely in India, the educational policies and the relevant curriculum and textbooks reflect the exhaustive elements of political literacy; there exists a big gap in the assessment of political literacy and no standardized framework for assess-

ing the political literacy level of citizens, youth in particular. Hence it paved the way for the researcher to embark on the journey of conceptualizing and developing the components of political literacy construct and thus developing a relevant assessment tool for youth with a comprehensive representation of Political literacy construct.

#### English language Literacy:

August et.al (2009) in their essay paper titled English Language Learners: Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners—Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth was aimed at synthesizing research work on the education of language-minority children and youth with respect to their attainment of literacy, and to produce a comprehensive report evaluating and synthesizing this literature. The essay was reported by a panel of 13 experts in second language development, cognitive development, curriculum and instruction, assessment, and methodology. The essay had five domains of English language literacy. 1) Development of Literacy in Second-Language Learners, 2) Cross-linguistic Relationships in Second Language Learners, 3) Socio-cultural Contexts and Literacy Development for Language Minority Students, 4) Educating Language Minority Students: Instructional Approaches and Professional Development, and 5) Language and Literacy Assessment of Language-Minority Students. This led the researcher to include English language literacy as a dimension under 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct and thus develop a scale by appending more components relevant to present and future needs of a challenging society.

Aula (2014) in his article titled The Problem with The English Language in India unveils the fact of English language literacy prevailing in India. The author unleashes the examples of an individual who is unable to read the label on the medicine been administered, unable to read the menu card at a restaurant, unable to read safety signs on the road, unable to fill in government applications for marriage certificate, tax filing, bank application and challenges. Even though, the author argues about English being the elite class language, to compete in this globalized world, English language education should be imparted to introduce the young to the world culture through the world of English literature. This point propelled the researcher to add English language literacy as one of the dimensions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct for youth.

#### Financial Literacy:

Cordero. M.J et. al (2016) in the paper titled The effect of financial literacy courses and their teachers on student achievement had summarized on the impact of financial literacy education on the decision making abilities of students in their real life situations pertaining to financial decisions. The authors have adopted difference in difference approach to calibrate the results of same students between two different subject results. It suggests that there is a significant impact on student achievement, regardless of type of training course adopted to teach those financial literacy concepts. The results of the study indicate that financial literacy courses are more effective if they are taught by people from private institutions (e.g. banks or insurance companies) using a cross-curricular approach.

Dam1 and Hotwan (2018) in their paper titled Financial Literacy: Conceptual Framework and Scale Development discusses on the concept of financial literacy. The authors had highlighted the need for high level of financial literacy to make informed decisions on personal finances. The four stage process of scale development process is adopted for financial literacy scale. The components of financial literacy scale comprise of Compound Interest, Inflation, Risk, Fixed Deposit, Tax Filing, Time value of Money, Stocks Mutual Funds, Diversification, Superannuation and Insurance. The implications of this paper refer to taking informed financial decisions for individuals, academicians and researchers. It emphasized on various dimensions of financial decisions to be considered. It stressed on the point that irrespective of whether an individual is from working class or from student community, financial literacy will help in their financial planning.

#### Digital literacy:

Morris (2018) in his article titled why it is important to be Digitally Literate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century argues about our education system and its outdated view on what it means to be literate in this world. The author points the example of the importance of digital literacy is the recent explosion of “fake news” media sites as today's youth are unable to differentiate between the information credible and non-credible online sources. It is also argued that honing digital literacy enables the youth to learn in new ways by interacting with the interests of their choice. Students are no longer confined to books; rather explore their possible interests from multiple sources at their finger tip. Digital literacy and its importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an evolving concept. The advancement of internet era has made digital literacy a required skill for every individual across the multiple domains of jobs. The author emphasizes that need for digital literacy will only rise more in coming years and it is up to all stakeholders in education domain to start imparting digital literacy aiming at fluency in the same.

UNESCO (2018) in its report titled A Global Framework of Reference on Digital Literacy Skills for Indicator 4.4.2 lists out the key competence areas such as Devices and software operations, Information and data literacy, Communication and collaboration, Digital content creation, Safety, Problem solving and Career-related competence. Nevertheless, the report emphasizes on the level of curricu-

lum for digital literacy should be correlated to the countries developmental plan, proficiencies required and the usage plans. The need for digital literacy is substantiated to one of sustainable development goals and targets that focuses on relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship” among youth and adults. This led the researcher to append digital literacy as one of the dimensions under 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct and thus develop the assessment tool.

#### Environmental literacy:

Williamson. et.al (2018) in the report titled Climate Change Needs Behavior Change Making the Case for Behavioral Solutions to Reduce Global Warming highlight's the key points on the role of behavior change in climate change. It focuses on foundations of climate change and the role for human behavior, Behavioral solutions to reduce emissions, understanding human behavior, Applying behavior change tools to natural resource conservation and climate action. The authors emphasize on the fact that to get people to change, we need to design innovative solutions that meet them where they are, using the power of emotional appeals, social incentives, and choice architecture as expertly as we apply economics and policy. It stresses on innovative approaches from behavioral science contributing to changing human behavior unleashes as a reason for hope. This indicates the need for swift action to impart environmental literacy from a behavioral science point of view.

Hollweg. K.S. et.al (2011) in their work titled Developing a Framework for Assessing Environmental Literacy discusses on definitions and research works accepted across national and international forums on environmental literacy. This framework creates a platform for the assessment developers to decide on the knowledge level, skills, behaviors and dispositions needed for making environmentally friendly decisions and thus to develop assessments on environmental literacy construct. The context of environmental literacy consists of components such as biodiversity that includes flora and fauna, population growth, consumption of natural resources, environmental quality and health that includes the impact of use and disposal of materials on air and water quality, Natural Hazards and Extreme Weather that includes decisions about housing in areas vulnerable to flooding, tidal and wind damage, and Land Use. The framework also stresses on key pointers of attitude, knowledge and behavior on which the environment literacy assessment tool be developed.

#### Global Awareness literacy:

Crawford and Kirby (2008) in their paper titled fostering student's global awareness: technology applications in social studies teaching and learning highlights the fact of pluralistic society and the need for knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour on global citizenship. The authors indicate the need for knowledge of interconnectedness of people worldwide necessary for employment and relationship in the global market. The authors stress on technology being the most prominent catalyst in enhancing the global awareness of the students.

Burnouf (2004) in her work titled Global Awareness and Perspectives in Global Education examines the construct of global education by elucidating the theoretical and practical underpinnings. The author stresses on imparting global awareness education from schools to practice global awareness from multiple perspectives. The author quotes an interesting work of Kirkwood (2001), that specifies on the new world dynamics that includes the daily lives of youth will be dealing with people from diverse gender, racial, linguistic, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Hence, it is inevitable to nurture youth with differing worldview to effectively function as a global citizen in ever evolving world and its challenges. These points propelled the researcher to add global awareness as a dimension under 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct and thus to develop an assessment tool for the same.

#### Ethics literacy:

UNESCO (2013) in its collaborative effort with UNDESA proposes imparting ethical values as part of education in youth. It emphasizes the role of youth with significant ethical values as change makers in the society to promote day to day challenges like good governance, social inclusion, tolerance, climate change and peace. This seminal report and its fact findings propelled the researcher to consider ethics literacy as one of the dimension under 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct.

Markulla Center for Applied ethics (2009) in its aggregated work titled A Framework for Ethical Decision Making defines the definition of ethics in decision making and it explains on what ethics in decision making is NOT and elaborates on why ethics in decision making is the hardest job for individuals and organizations. It also explains about five types of approaches in decision making that includes the utilitarian approach, the rights approach, the fairness or justice approach, the common Good approach, and the virtue approach. Furthermore, the work substantiates the need for putting together all the approach based on the need and thus make decisions. Finally, it gives a framework of ethics in decision making by following a logical step wise process such as recognizing an ethical issue, get the facts a, evaluating the alternative actions, making an informed decision and testing it and finally reflecting on the outcome and make necessary corrections to it. This framework paved way for conceptualizing the ethics literacy construct as one of the important dimensions under 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct for the youth.

**CONCLUSION:****Conceptual framework of 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills:**

A detailed and in depth study of the existing literature on life skills unfolds the fact that some of the researchers across the world have made sincere attempts to develop diverse range of the Life Skills framework. However, there is still a gap in defining the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills construct covering a spectrum of dimensions. Furthermore, as per UNICEF's evaluation report of Life skills education models around the world, there is an inadequacy and/or absence of Comprehensive Life Skills Education Assessment framework for youth that permeates through the present and future world Life Skills Education for youth (UNICEF, 2012). To face challenges in day-to-day life, changes has to be brought at all levels: global level to individual level, the new life skills construct has to be looked into as a broader construct as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Life Skills. According to the theoretical framework backed by information from the review of literature, the researcher formulated the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills conceptual framework. The figure illustrates the ten dimensions of 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills conceptual framework and the operational definitions of the dimension's respectively. Hence, the researcher has defined 21<sup>st</sup> Century Life Skills construct into ten new dimensions namely.

- Physical Literacy Skills
- Psychological literacy Skills
- Health Literacy Skills
- Financial literacy Skills
- Political literacy Skills
- English Language Literacy Skills
- Digital literacy Skills
- Environmental literacy Skills
- Global Awareness Skills
- Ethics Literacy Skills



**Figure 1.2: Conceptual framework of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Life Skills**

**Operational Definition of 21<sup>st</sup> Century life Skills:**

21<sup>st</sup> Century Life skills are the set of abilities of an individual to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards diverse literacy skills in dealing with everyday challenges of the globalized world.

**Physical literacy skills:**

Physical literacy skills is an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards one's own body and its functions to practice and promote physical health.

**Psychological literacy skills:**

Psychological literacy skills is an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards psychological science and application of the knowledge in achieving wellbeing in everyday personal, professional, social and global needs.

**Health literacy Skills:**

Health literacy Skills is an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards the ability to make appropriate decisions in relation to health by obtaining, processing, and understanding the basic health information and services.

**Financial Literacy skills:**

Financial literacy is an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards making informed decisions in finances to achieve financial wellbeing.

**Political literacy skills:**

Political literacy skills is an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards a responsible citizenship and to contribute to the society by applying the higher order critical thinking skills to research, evaluate, discuss and actively participate in the political affairs.

**Digital literacy skills:**

Digital literacy skills is an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards accessing, managing, understanding, integrating, communicating, evaluating, creating and applying the digital knowledge in the digital world effectively for all Human purposes.

**Environmental literacy skills:**

Environmental literacy skills is an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards environment and its associated problems and to identify, analyse, evaluate potential solutions and propose an action plan to address specific issues contributing to sustainable future.

**English Language Literacy skills:**

English Language literacy skills is an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards alphabetic, fluency, vocabulary, reading, and writing, talking and creating new content in English language and use it appropriately to meet the goals and demands of personal, social and global needs.

**Ethics Literacy skills:**

Ethics literacy skills are an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards the standard way of behaviour that a person has to act in an appropriate moral way without any bias whatsoever.

**Global Awareness Literacy Skills:**

Global Awareness literacy skills are an ability to comprehensively understand one's own attitude, knowledge and behaviour towards in identifying, appreciating, learning and practicing the interdisciplinary knowledge about the world cutting across geographical, political, economic, social and cultural boundaries to effectively participate as a global citizen.

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